

Courier

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Don Smith Awards honor county employees

Three county employees were honored recently with Don Smith Awards. The awards, presented at the Jan. 23 Board of Supervisors meeting, recognizes employees of the county government and school system who have made outstanding contributions to the well-being of their

fellow employees. The award was established by the Employee Advisory Council to honor Donald D. Smith, a long time employee of the Office of Comprehensive Planning, who was a mainstay of the EAC for 16 years until his retirement in 1990. Winners received a plaque and a check from the EAC for \$1,000.

Vera Finberg, librarian; **Keith Foxx**,

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Anita Baker, EAC chair (center) joined Keith Foxx and Susan Herbert with their awards.

How the library can help you

County employees enjoy a special relationship with the library system, both for work and personal enrichment. If you want to increase your skills, research a topic important to your agency, make your agency's services more accessible to people with disabilities, or find something good to read, the Fairfax County Public Library can help you.

ELLVIS -- The Employee Lending Library for Video Instructional Services (ELLVIS) has hundreds of training videos that county employees can borrow for free. The topics range from A to Z and include subjects such as stress management, deliv-

ering good customer service, successful interviewing, and how to use specific computer applications. There are more than 150 subjects, and you can see what they are by clicking on ELLVIS at <http://infoweb/library>.

"You could get a group of employees together to watch a video in a conference room, or you could take a tape home and watch it yourself," explains ELLVIS manager **John Kiefman**. Tapes can be borrowed for three weeks, and can be sent to you via inter-office mail. Or you can pick them up at Suite 329 in

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For weather delays:
 703-324-7669
 703-246-7669

Awards, from page 1

DPWES engineer; and **Susan Herbert**, Fire & Rescue administration, were cited for their positive attitudes, knowledge and commitment to making a better workplace for county employees.

Vera Finberg (unavailable for the presentation) was selected for serving 13 years as the employee representative on the county retirement board. Her knowledge of finance and investment has been an asset to that board.

Keith Foxx underscored his commitment to county employees by promoting health and fitness, most notably through the new Jump & Pump program at the Government Center's Fitness and Wellness Center where he helps encourage, motivate and build team effort (see *Courier* articles, Sept. 16 and Dec. 23, 2005).

Susan Herbert was honored for her work as a facilitator and guiding force for strategic planning efforts throughout the county. She was instrumental in helping the EAC develop its recent strategic plan.

Others who were nominated for the Don Smith Award and received certificates of rec-

ognition included

- ♦ **David Baucom**, detective, Police Department
- ♦ **Purvis Dawson**, lieutenant, Police Department
- ♦ **Monica Foote**, business analyst, Department of Administration for Human Services
- ♦ **Elizabeth Brooke Fuller**, mental health therapist, Community Services Board
- ♦ **Jean Helmandollar**, legal records service manager, Circuit Court
- ♦ **Stephanie Lawrence**, human service worker, Department of Family Services
- ♦ **Deborah McClure**, administrative assistant, Department of Administration for Human Services
- ♦ **Shawn Monaghan**, detective, Police Department
- ♦ **Maria Padmore**, human services assistant, Health Department
- ♦ **Sandra Rathbun**, management analyst, Circuit Court
- ♦ **John Smith**, master technician, Fire & Rescue
- ♦ **Guy Yates**, senior real estate appraiser, Department of Tax Administration. ■

Library, from page 1

Government Center. Call 703-324-8318, TTY 711, for details.

"Some of our videos are really entertaining," says **Fran Millhouser**, the library's training coordinator. She cites management training tapes by former Monty Python comedian John Cleese and a video on telephone etiquette by Lily Tomlin's "Ernestine." "Good presenters know that laughter can help the learning process, and we have some of the best presenters in the world in ELLVIS."

Information Central – In fiscal year 2005, the public asked county librarians more than 800,000 research questions. County agencies also have a librarian dedicated to performing research about agency-related issues: **MaryAnn Sheehan**, information central coordinator.

"Sometimes county staff ask me to send them an article they've heard about, or look up a report related to their industry," Sheehan said. "I've also researched a lot of interesting subjects for county agencies, from adoption

practices to deer-hunting procedures."

There is no charge to county agencies for this service. For more information, call 703-324-8343, TTY 711, or e-mail MaryAnn.Sheehan@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Access Services – Fairfax County residents are aging, and older people often need help seeing and hearing information about county services. The library's Access Services branch has equipment that can reproduce information in Braille for citizens or county employees. Agencies also can borrow disabilities awareness kits, portable listening devices and catalogs for assistive technologies from Access Services.

"We have helpful books, tapes and videos for county agencies that have clients with disabilities, and we also have useful information for caregivers, healthcare workers and others serving seniors," said Access Services Branch Manager **Starr Smith**.

As one of the library system's 21 branches, Access Services also has popular novels that

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Library, from page 2

county employees can borrow for their own enjoyment. Smith says she's noticed people peering in at the books displayed on Access Services' shelves. "It's OK to come in and check out our books!" she laughs.

Employees who work in Herrity, Pennino or Government Center offices can find bestsellers and other books in the library's online catalog, and have those books delivered to Access Services. You'll be notified by phone or e-mail when your books are ready to be picked up. You'll need a library card to use this service; cards are available for free to anyone who lives, works or goes to school in Fairfax County. Access Services is located in Suite 123 of the Government Center. For more information, call 703-324-8380, TTY 703-324-8365. To apply for a library card online, visit the library's Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

County employees who work outside the Government Center campus are invited to use any of the library's 20 other branches closest to where they live. In the next few years there will be more locations to choose from, because the library is building branches in Oakton (scheduled to open in the fall of 2007) and Burke Centre (scheduled to open in the spring of 2008). Also, the Fairfax City branch will have a new home on the corner of North Street and Old Lee Highway. The new building, expected to open in the fall of next year, is part of the redevelopment of downtown Fairfax and is being funded by the City of Fairfax through the sale of Fairfax City bonds.

In addition, four of the library system's oldest branches are slated for renovation, which, along with the two new branches, will be paid for by the bond referendum passed by voters in November 2004. "We will have seven capital projects in various stages of construction over the next five years," said Library Director **Edwin S. Clay III**. "We'll use trailers or rent space in nearby locations so that residents can continue to have library service while the buildings are being worked on."

Why the need for additional and expanded library buildings? For one thing, the county's

population has exploded since the majority of branches were first built. Secondly, libraries have become the place where people meet in the digital age. More than five million in-person visits were made to Fairfax County library branches last year. And although Fairfax is one of the most wired places in the world, people signed up to use library computers more than 500,000 times last year. There were almost 174,000 attendees at more than 5,800 library events, and an estimated 7,000 groups signed up to use library meeting rooms for community activities.

In addition to needing space for more and more people, libraries also need room for all those books! As well as printed books, there is an enormous demand for recorded books. "Our recorded books are extremely popular," said **Julie Pringle**, the coordinator of the library's Collection Management and Acquisitions department. Readers checked books out of the library more than 11 million times last year; of those, more than 800,000 were books on cassette tapes and CDs. For those with a long commute, recorded books can help them stay informed and entertained on their way to work. To find a list of recorded books by genre (such as mysteries, sci-fi, westerns or biographies), follow the links under "Good Reading" on the library's Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library. ■

— by Lois Kirkpatrick,
Fairfax County Public Library



Children participated in groundbreaking for the new Fairfax City branch library. (Library photo.)



EAC Update

PfP Review Committee recommendations presented to county executive

During the FY 2006 budget process, the Board of Supervisors directed that a review of the Pay for Performance System be conducted for possible improvements. In November 2004, **Sue Woodruff**, assistant director for Human Resources, convened a group of human resources professionals, budget analysts and employee advocates to review the PfP system and explore possible changes or enhancements to the system. The members of the PfP Review Committee were **Barbara Ensor**, DAHS; **Curt Dierdorff**, Parks; **Sara Simmons**, DPZ; **Toni Garcia**, Fire & Rescue; **Joan Rodgers**, CSB; **Stella Norman**, EAC-Group 10; **Karen Conchar**, EAC-Group 3; **Anita Baker**, EAC-Group 5; **Paula Ferrer**, EAC-Group 11; **Joseph Mondoro**, DMB; and **Bob Fitzpatrick**, DHR.

The review committee listed common concerns that members either experienced first-hand or heard from other employees. Many issues concerned inconsistent performance elements for the same job class within an agency, outdated position descriptions, the lack of proper coaching and feedback throughout the year, and problems with one of the multi-rater systems. Many on the PfP Review Committee felt that the rating tool and the performance award scale need revision. The committee

agreed that the recommendations would be to implement any changes to the evaluation tool or the rating scale in the FY 2007 budget cycle.

Many members of the review committee believed that a 1.7 percent award for a fully proficient employee who has mastered all their job skills was not an appropriate award. The EAC members proposed to the PfP Review Committee that the fully proficient rating should be more in the range of a 3.0 percent award. They also recognized that there needed to be an additional level, or a "fifth bar," between unsatisfactory and fully proficient that would reflect employee performance that was "in development". This would give supervisors an alternative to rating an employee's performance as unsatisfactory, for instance when employees who are learning new jobs and appear to have the potential to improve. The majority of the review committee also recommended that there should be some sort of a pay award for this new level and recommended an award of 1.5 percent. The committee also recommended that the additional bar and the changes to the rating scale must be done concurrently to make any meaningful impact on the problems with PfP.

The recommendations were presented to the county executive for consideration in the summer of 2005. The county implemented the addition of the fifth evaluation bar in FY2007. Supervisors should be discussing this change with their staff during the next several months. Any change to the pay awards must go through the annual budget process in the spring of 2006.

The PfP Review Committee was a collaboration of county employees from varying disciplines who were dedicated to evaluating and improving the Pay for Performance system. While not always in agreement on every point, the committee maintained congenial and open discussions. Everyone who participated was dedicated to the task and charge given by the Board of Supervisors and was very committed to recommending meaningful changes. ■

— by Paula Ferrer, EAC

Working toward the games

Members of the Fairfax County Police Department, Sheriff's Office and Fire & Rescue Department are preparing a bid to host the 2013 World Police and Fire Games. According to Police Sergeant **Bruce Blechl**, this is the equivalent of the international Olympic Games. "This is a world-wide event, and to host the games in Fairfax County would recognize the outstanding organizations and community we have here," said Blechl.

The evaluation committee will be reviewing the county's bid this summer and Blechl is hopeful about the outcome, "especially when the committee sees the positive commitment of our members and the many good things about this area."

Watch for continued updates on this effort or contact Blechl, 703-922-0889, TTY 711, for more information or how you can help bring this event to Fairfax County. ■

Employee Benefits Division to conduct dependent eligibility audit

As announced last fall in open enrollment communications, the Employee Benefits Division will be conducting an audit of all dependents who are covered under the county health and dental programs during 2006.

The eligibility criteria for coverage of dependent children changed effective Jan. 1, 2006. To be eligible for coverage under the county's health or dental plans now, a child must be:

- A biological child, step child, adopted child (or a child placed with the employee for adoption) or a child for whom the employee has been appointed legal guardian or court ordered legal custody; and
- Unmarried; and
- Under age 19; or
- Age 19, but less than age 23, and a full-time student (as defined by the accredited college, university, vocational or technical school).

Disabled children who are incapable of self support are eligible to remain on the county's health plans, regardless of age, if the disability occurred before age 23.

Dependent children who were covered under the county's plans as of Dec. 31, 2005 and who qualified under the former criteria have until Dec. 31, 2006 to meet the new eligibility rules.

During the audit, employees will be asked to certify their dependent's eligibility for coverage. To verify eligibility of their spouse,

employees will be requested to provide:

- A copy of their marriage certificate; or
- If a marriage certificate is not available, a copy of the first page of their most recent federal income tax filing.

To verify eligibility of dependent child(ren), employees will be requested to provide:

- A birth certificate;
- Proof of adoption or placement for adoption;
- Proof of legal guardianship or legal custody.
- Proof of full-time student status, if the child is between ages 19-23.

Employees who have previously provided DHR with copies of marriage or birth certificates will not be required to produce the documents again during this audit. However, each employee covering dependents must certify that their dependents meet eligibility criteria.

Employees who do not have marriage, birth certificates or court orders on file with DHR are encouraged to begin gathering the necessary documents now so that they will be ready to provide it when the audit takes place.

Former spouses and married dependent children are not eligible for health and dental coverage under the county's plans and you must remove them by completing a Fairfax County Government Health, Dental and Flexible Spending Account Enrollment/Change Form and submitting it to Employee Benefits. This form is available on the Benefits page of the Infoweb. ■

Focus on Benefits



All for one, one for all

Wouldn't it be great if Fairfax County residents were familiar with the six Board of Supervisor priorities that guide county policy and the seven vision elements that guide county programs and services? Well, now they can be. As part of the Fairfax County Communication Strategy, a calendar has been developed that identifies specific Board's priorities and vision elements with each month of the year, and encourages each agency to promote the programs and services that support that month's themes.

- ♦ The Board's priorities are listed at <http://infoweb/cex/comstrategy/about.htm>
- ♦ The county's vision elements are at http://infoweb/cex/commstrategy/planning/vision_elements.htm
- ♦ The editorial calendar is available at <http://infoweb/cex/comstrategy/editorialcalendar.htm>. If you have any questions about using the calendar, call the Office of Public Affairs at 703-324-3187, TTY 711. ■

Millennium Forum

Immigration: Impact on the workplace

"Immigration is the most powerful demographic force to impact Northern Virginia in this decade," said Dr. **Roger Templin Jr.**, president of Northern Virginia Community College, as he spoke to the Jan. 18 Millennium Forum audience. He added that more than 400,000 first-generation immigrants live in our area and they have accounted for 60 percent of our population growth over the past decade.

This growth has changed the demand for services that government, educators, businesses and the health care industry are asked to provide. It also has produced a gap between those who provide services and those who use them. "It's a mismatch. The people who serve – such as you in this audience – speak one language and look like the county did 50 years ago. Those we serve are increasingly diverse," Templin explained.

Templin added that Northern Virginia has one of the fastest-growing economies in the United States. However, in the next decade, our region could face an increasing shortage of highly trained workers in the IT, telecommunications, biotechnology, health, education and government fields that form the backbone of this area's economy. In the next

decade Fairfax County will experience only one-third of the population growth in the region, but 41 percent of the job growth. "What are we going to do for a workforce?" he asked. "How will Fairfax County recruit the best and brightest into government service? How will we make sure that the profile of those we employ matches the profile of the people they serve, unless we do things differently?"

To address this issue, Templin believes that the influx of new Americans could be Northern Virginia's silver bullet. "We have a vested interest in their success. They are our workforce." But, he added, "That asset is not going to drop out of heaven and be automatically available to us."

To ensure future workers for the county's sophisticated needs, Templin urges community, government and business leaders to develop strategies to "grow our own workforce." He suggests creating early experiences for students, such as internships, that will help immigrants and their children learn what career opportunities are available and what training is necessary. "We have to get started now," Templin told the audience, "for the future of Fairfax County's economic competitiveness and to maintain the quality of life we know."

Such strategies, as well as dealing with other implications of our region's explosive growth in immigration, will not be an easy task, Templin admitted. "Some of our most difficult problems will come out of this," he said. "And some of our most brilliant opportunities."

The next Millennium Forum is scheduled for March 1. Dr. **Richard Florida** will discuss his book *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life*.

To borrow a videotape of past Millennium Forum presentations, call the Employee Lending Library for Video Instructional Services at 703-324-8318, TTY 703-324-8365, or e-mail john.kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov. For more information about the series, visit <http://infoweb/mfs>. ■

– by Pat Bangs, Fairfax County Public Library

Volunteer Tutors Needed

Volunteers are needed for day and evening hours to work one-to-one with adult learners in public libraries or adult learning centers. Additional opportunities are available working with adolescents in alternative school settings.

The Volunteer Learning Program trains tutors, assesses learners and provides materials with follow-up support. VLP is a joint community project of the Fairfax County Public Schools (Adult and Community Education), Fairfax County's Juvenile Court and the Fairfax County Public Library. The program has been serving the community for 30 years and its success continues to rely on volunteers.

For more information about volunteer opportunities and upcoming training dates, please call 703-246-2139, TTY 711 or e-mail VLP@fcps.edu. ■

Briefs

Animal Services participates in Katrina dog rescue

Fairfax County Animal Services is joining with Loudoun County, Prince William County, Arlington County, Alexandria and Manassas Park to help the Humane Society of Southern Mississippi with its continuing influx of dogs and puppies from Hurricane Katrina. The six jurisdictions will travel together to Gulfport, Miss., Feb. 2-4 and expect to return with 50 to 80 dogs and puppies. The Fairfax shelter anticipates having 15-20 of these animals to place in foster homes beginning Feb. 5 for two weeks to help with their adjustment. The shelter will hold a special adoption event tentatively scheduled for Feb. 19. All dogs will be seen by a veterinarian prior to placement. Employees who live in the county and are interested

in applying to be a temporary foster family should e-mail **Ellen Kamilakis**, volunteer coordinator, or call 703-830-3681, TTY 711, for an information packet and application.

Have a good heart

And you certainly will have a better heart if you buy a Healthy Heart Pass at one of the area's RECenters. Until Feb. 14, you can save on money on membership passes which are good at any of the nine RECenters. And remember, you can get a free subscription to Parktakes by calling 703-222-4664, TTY 711.

National Mentoring Month

The Fairfax Mentoring Partnership, an initiative of the Fairfax Partnership for Youth, is promoting National Mentoring Month throughout January to raise awareness and

increase recruitment of volunteers. Recruiting programs will be held at Fairfax County RECenters throughout the month. Mentoring programs in Fairfax County have waiting lists of young people seeking to be matched with a caring adult and we hope these events will attract new mentors. For more information on mentoring, contact the Fairfax Mentoring Partnership at 703-324-5701, TTY 711. For more information on the Fairfax Partnership for Youth, call 703-324-5703, TTY 711.

February is African-American History Month

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaimed the month of February as African-American History Month in Fairfax County. Watch for informational and educational programs at the county all month. ■

Feb. 6-10 is National Consumer Protection Week

"Consumer Protection? It's the Name of the Game" is the theme of National Consumer Protection Week, and the Fairfax County Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection will celebrate the week with free events that provide valuable information to consumers. Plan to enjoy one of these activities during the week of Feb. 6-10.

- ♦ An information table will be located outside of Suite 127 of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Feb. 6-10. Consumer investigators will provide advice and information, and consumers will have the opportunity to test their consumer IQ.

- ♦ Lunchtime screenings of "Consumer Focus" and "Your Community, Your Call" will be held in Suite 133 of the Government Center.

Investigators in front of Suite 127 will answer questions.

- ♦ Brown bag identity theft seminars will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at 11:15 a.m. and Thursday, Feb. 9, at 1 p.m. at the Government Center, and on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 12:30 p.m., at the South County Government Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.

- ♦ Fairfax County government cable Channel 16 will broadcast a "Consumer Focus" live call-in program for consumer questions on Thursday, Feb. 9, from 7 to 8 p.m. with guests and staff of the Consumer Protection Division answering consumers' calls. The show will replay on Channel 16 on Tuesday, Feb. 14, Wednesday, Feb. 15, and Friday, Feb. 17, from 7 to 8 p.m.

In addition to providing advice and informational material, the Consumer Protection Division

investigates and mediates consumer complaints and tenant-landlord disputes to determine whether consumer protection laws have been violated. The division provides a complaint history on county businesses to assist consumers with pre-purchase information; meets with homeowner associations in the county; and licenses and regulates taxicab drivers and operators, peddlers, solicitors, precious metal and gem dealers, pawnbrokers, massage establishments and therapists and going-out-of-business sales.

Consumer Protection Division staff members are available at Access Fairfax in Suite 125 of the South County Government Center on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumer.htm or call 703-222-8435, TTY 711. ■

Front desk security is good customer service

Many county facilities are public facilities, open to members of the public who are paying their taxes, attending meetings and events, or obtaining other county services. Occasionally, public facilities are targeted by professional office thieves, especially facilities with lax security, and where the thief can blend in and not be noticed. Unattended or unsecured purses, wallets and laptops are frequent targets.

In October 2004, Fairfax County Police arrested and charged a man with fraud and grand larceny. He was dressed well and entered the county offices during business hours without an ID, targeting unsecured purses and wallets. The Police noted that if he was asked for an ID or questioned, he would leave.

The lesson here is for county employees to remain vigilant and be aware of the people in the work areas. It all starts with the office's front desk receptionist. Here are some tips to improve security.

- ♦ Post signs that ask all visitors to stop at the receptionist desk.
- ♦ Space designated for the public should be clearly marked and separate from employee work areas.
- ♦ If the receptionist does not recognize a visitor who continues into the work area, the receptionist should stop the visitor and ask if he/she can help them.
- ♦ Wear your county photo ID in a clearly visible manner. If a person doesn't have one, ask them to wait in the front lobby area while you call and verify their appointment.

An office thief is not going to stick around for your phone call to verify an appointment.

♦ Have another employee fill in when the receptionist takes a break. Never leave the office doors unlocked when the reception desk is not staffed.

♦ Ask a person without a visible ID how you can help them will ensure that they are authorized to be there as well as provide good customer service.

♦ Finally, just in case one of these office thieves does get by, remember to always keep secured your personal belongings and county-issued property, such as laptops, cell phones and blackberries. Carry the keys with you. It is better to take a few moments to secure your belongings than to become a victim of theft or even identity theft.

Following the October arrest, Fairfax County Police noted the following in a Washington Post article, Oct. 28, 2004, "People think five minutes isn't a lot of time to be away from your wallet, but this guy needed just 30 seconds. People need to be more vigilant in offices."

For more information on front desk security, please contact Fairfax County Security Manager **Cindy Rubin**, 703-324-2308, TTY 711. ■

Youth Leadership program graduates 39 high school students on Jan. 25

Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly** and County Executive **Tony Griffin** and School Superintendent **Jack Dale** challenged the 39 graduates of the Youth Leadership Program on Jan. 25 to continue their interest in local government and community affairs as they move on with their lives.

The annual program, sponsored by the Department of Management and Budget in partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools, introduces top high school students to various aspects of county government. ■

Youth Leadership graduates



Courier is published each payday Friday. The deadline for articles and information is two weeks before publication.

Office of Public Affairs
12000 Government Center Pkwy, Suite 551
Fairfax, VA 22035-0065

John Nash, editor
703-324-3197
E-mail john.nash@fairfaxcounty.gov
OPA office courier@fairfaxcounty.gov
Fax 703-324-2010, TTY 711

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